A

Letter to a Friend:

WITH

REMARKS

Upon two Pamphlets, lately publiſhed,

In Defence of

TRITHEISM;

VIZ.

A BRIEF ENQUIRY. By *J. T.*

And

THE SOCINIAN SLAIN. By *J. H.*

In malâ cauſâ non poſſunt aliter, at cauſam Malam quis coégit eos habere! Auguſt.

LONDON;

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SIR,

I Have, at your requeſt, read over two little Books you were pleas'd to put into my hands; *viz. The Brief Enquiry*, which I find was written by *J. T.* and, *The Socinian Slain*, written, as 'tis reported, by one *J. H.* And really, Sir, when I have perus'd ſuch Diſcourſes, written with an Air of Candour and Sincerity; and when I ſee the Authors ſo very zealous in defending their own Miſtakes, and find them loading with heavy Aggravations the Opinions of others, I cannot but extreamly regret the ill uſage of thoſe important Truths they undertake to confute: and I aſſure you am at the ſame time no leſs concern'd that ſo much Zeal, as theſe two Writers have expreſs'd, ſhould be miſpent in a wrong Cauſe; and not barely ſo, but in oppoſition to the moſt *Natural* and moſt *Scriptural Notion* that the *beſt of Men*, and the *beſt of Chriſtians* have ever had of the *Deity*.

How unhappily have theſe Men, and a great many others who have earneſtly contended in theſe Controverſies, in concluſion prov'd nothing ſo effectually as this, That Education and Intereſt are irreſiſtable; that they will put ſuch a biaſs upon a wiſe Man's Judgment and manner of reaſoning, which without extraordinary Care and divine Aſſiſtance, will become almoſt inſuperable to him.

I ſay almoſt, and not altogether inſuperable; becauſe I'm perſwaded there is no Man ſo much under the power of Miſtake in the common neceſſary Points of Religion, but may be undeceiv'd, if he makes his Enquiries with any tolerable degree of Candour and Ingenuity.

But when a man ſets up for abſolute Certainty in a controverted Point, and ſpeaks and dictates like an inſpired Writer, there remains no remedy for his Errors, till he is cur'd of his Infallibility.

What opinion theſe two Perſons have of their own Performances, is certainly known to God and their own Conſciences alone: but they give abundant ſatisfaction to the World, that they are Men who have not temper enough for any Controverſy, nor skill enough to manage this.

The moſt emittent Writers both for Learning and Dignity, have written againſt us with the Decency of Gentlemen, and the Temper of good Chriſtians; they make it appear that they can be candid and charitable to an Adverſary; and how warmly ſoever they are engag'd in the Debate, yet they keep within the bounds of Religion and good Breeding. And tho the Cauſe they engaged in was never to be confuted, yet 'tis own'd, if it could have been, they certainly had done it. But this *Brace of Writers* have taken up the Diſpute, when the field was quitted by the moſt *ſober* and moſt *learned* of our Opponents: and when the moſt celebrated Univerſity of *Oxon* had 'decreed in our favour, and condemn'd the vulgar *Tritheiſtic Trinity*, and the Rev. Dean of *Paul's* had in his

The late Bp of *Worceſter*, Bp *Chicheſter*, Bp *Sarum*, Bp *Gloceſter*, Mr. *How*.

State of the Socinian Controverſy, with a Modeſty that became a Man of his Dignity and Learning, handſomely retracted, or at leaſt prudently ſoften'd whatever had the countenance and appearance of *Tritheiſm* in his former Writings.

With what good Grace then can theſe two Writers of the loweſt Claſs, who, it may be, were never taught in any Claſs, undertake to revive the Debate that was given over by the beſt and wiſeſt Gentlemen of the *Tritheiſtic Party?* Do they think they can ſay ſomewhat better than any that have written before them? ſure they are too modeſt to be of that opinion: or is it becauſe they will ſay and argue as no body would beſides them? this may be true enough indeed: for they both of them argueand prove in that unuſual Method that one may ſee at the firſt bluſh, that they *underſtand not what they ſay, nor whereof they affirm.*

They knew (certainly) when they began to write, that this Controverſy, whatever others might be, was *terra incognita* to 'em both; and yet, which is very much to be admir'd, they are as *poſitive* and as *decretory* as if they acted by *Legantine Authority* from the *Holy See*, and came not to *debate*, but *decide* this controverted Point.

The *Brief Enquiry*, *Pref.* tells his Readers with very great gravity—— Gentlemen, pray take notice, *I write only for Truth*; but I remember the time when he durſt not diſpute for it, and made an honeſt and true confeſſion that he could not.

And he adds, (*ibid.*) *That Chriſtian Charity must not be abus'd towards thoſe who root up the Foundations of Religion:* no, nor muſt it be abus'd towards any Perſons whatever, nor on any account whatever. To abuſe Chriſtian Charity would be a great abuſe indeed; but to abuſe it for the ſake of ill Men, would ſtill be a much greater abuſe. But I ſuppoſe he would inſinuate that the *Unitarians* root up the Foundations of Religion, and that to treat 'em charitably, would be to abuſe Chriſtian Charity, which ought not to be done. God forgive him for his uncharitable Inſinuation, and we will too.; but let him remember there is not a more ſcurvy abuſe of the Chriſtian, nor of any Religion indeed, than to affirm that it teaches us not to exerciſe Charity towards Men of a different Opinion.

But tho the *Brief Enquirer* be ſo very wary how he abuſes Chriſtian Charity; yet, to the great ſcandal of all pious Chriſtians, he cares not what abuſes he flings at *Chriſt* and the *Chriſtian Religion*, provided he can expoſe the *Unitarians:* for, abating a few pages, a good part of his Book conſiſts in odious Compariſons of *Chriſtianity* with *Mahometaniſm*, and *Chriſt* with *Mahomet:* and if *Chriſt* be not the *Supreme God*, and of the ſame *Eſſence* with the *Father*, he wickedly infers, to the juſt abhorrence of all that love the *Lord Jeſus* in truth and ſincerity, *P.* 14 and 51. *That Chriſt was an Impoſtor and Deceiver; that the Jews juſtly ſentenc'd him to death for Blaſphemy, and rejected his Apoſtles; that the Chriſtian Religion is Idolatry and Superſtition, and the Meſſiah is not yet come*, &c.

And theſe terrible Inferences are not made *en paſſant*, and by the by; but he continues to copy Monſieur *Abbadie*'s rude, ſcandalous, and impious

Expreſſions

Expreſſions for ſeveral pages together.

If, ſays he, *p.* 15. *Jeſus Chriſt is not true God, of the ſame Eſſence with the Father, the Mahometan Religion is preferable to the Chriſtian, and* Mahomet *a greater Prophet than* Chriſt, *becauſe the Chriſtian Religion brings in Idolatry, and the Mahometan aboliſhes it*, &c.

How gladly would the *Brief Enquirer* prove the Mahometan to be the better Religion! why elſe dos he take that for granted to prove it, which every Body denys; *viz.* That the *Chriſtian Religion* brings in *Idolatry:* for there is no Chriſtian, but the *Antichriſtian Enquirer*, and his *Abbadie*, who inſinuates a Charge of *Idolatry* againſt the *Chriſtian Religion* upon account of the Honour therein given to Chriſt. Even thoſe *Chriſtians* who are for a *co-equal Adoration* of three *co-equal co-eternal Beings*, abhor the charging Idolatry upon the *Chriſtian Religion*; much leſs will they, or can they be thought to countenance ſo deteſtable an Accuſation, who declare for the ſupreme Honour and Adoration of *one ſingle Infinite All-ſufficient Being*, who is the *God* and *Father* of our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*.

He proceeds in his *deteſtable Inferences*, and aſſerts, *p.* 16. That *the Worſhip of Jeſus Chriſt is Idolatry, if he is not God.* How! dares the *Enquirer* aſſert, that to honour him whom *God the Father* has honour'd (2 *Pet.* 1. 17.) and highly exalted, is *Idolatry* that to give him a Name above every Name, and confeſs him *Lord*, to the *Glory of God the Father*, is *Idolatry? Phil.* 2. 9, 10, 11. ſee *Joh.* 5. 22, 23. What Notion I wonder has this *haſty Enquirer* of *Worſhip*, and of *Idolatry!* I dare be his Security that he is a perfect Stranger to the true Notion of either of 'em, how loudly ſoever he may declaim with the dreadful Charge of *Idolatry:* for I would demand of this *bold Enquirer*, where is the Idolatry? if the *Holy Jeſus* have all the honour and veneration paid him, but that alone which he himſelf gave to *his Father* and our *Father*, and to *his God* and *our God*, to whom he aſcended. Yet this *Bold Enquirer*, *p.* 16. takes a freſh ſtart from this very Charge, too too like a good *Muſſulman*, to extol his *holy Prophet Mahomet* for a very conſiderable Teacher, and a great Reformer of Mankind. How deplorable a Caſe is it, that ſome Men write juſt as they have liv'd, like true Mahometans; and have preſented the World with a fair occaſion to conclude they would be extreamly gratify'd if their *Arabian Prophet's* Religion were eſtabliſh'd in *England:* for a good *Muſſulman* may keep a *good Conſcience*, and a *brace of Concubines* at the ſame time: *for they are not incommunicable.*

The *Enquirer*, *p.* 16. to ſhew you his good liking of *Mahomet* and his Doctrine, inſiſts upon it in a large Vindication and Encomium on both; *How can we but have a great opinion of* Mahomet! *He hath taught Men ſo and ſo*, &c. *What can beſpeak a Man more inſpired of God? Surely he was a very great Prophet, and all he hath taught ought to be own'd as Divine.* P. 17, 18. *He is a greater Prophet than all under the Law, yea preferable to Chriſt himſelf; which*, ſays he, *p.* 19. *will appear if you conſider his Doctrine, or the ſucceſs of his Miniſtry——He hath eſtabliſh'd his Religion upon firm Foundations, and taken wiſer Methods—, and was*

much,

much wiſer and better than Chriſt; he had greater Candour, Truth and Charity, greater care of, and zeal for the Glory of God than Jeſus Chriſt, who makes himſelf one with the moſt High God. P. 21. *If Chriſt was not God,* Mahomet *ſpoke more truly and plainly than Chriſt, had more Wiſdom, and took more care not to entangle the Souls of Men.* P. 22. *Nay if Chriſt was not true God, he was an Impoſtor, and his Diſciples Deceivers, and the Chriſtian Religion is a Cheat, Superſtition and Idolatry.* What a terrible Outrage is here upon the Chriſtian Religion! Theſe are the execrable Conſequences the confident Enquirer preſumes to draw from his obſcure, equivocal and unexpounded Premiſes, and has taken a ſcandalous liberty of publiſhing this Raillery upon the Chriſtian Religion in a Chriſtian Nation, and with his own name in the Title Page: Are theſe the Fruits of his Zeal and his Orthodoxy? Muſt Chriſtianity it ſelf be decry'd and vilify'd, if it be not the thing he miſtakes it to be? Is this the rare Method of confuting the *Unitarians?* this will rather ſerve to confirm 'em in this Truth, That they and the Chriſtian Religion muſt ſtand and fall together; and he that deſigns to confute them and what they maintain, does in effect undertake nothing leſs than a Confutation of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the *Divine Writings* of the *New Teſtament.*

What this *Enquirer* is maintaining in the remainder of his Book is a full and complete inſtance of *this:* for *he* produces Text upon Text, and one Scripture upon another, to ſhew that *another diſtinct Being* is a *moſt High God*, beſide him *who is the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; and unleſs you will grant him this Senſe, and admit this Proof to be ſufficient, he'll reject the H. Scriptures, and give the preference to his *beloved Alchoran:* for that teaches, as he informs you, That *none other but the eternal Father is God*, p. 21. whereas he looks upon it as certain and evident, that Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles taught, that another, nay a third diſtinct Being, are truly and properly *Gods, coequal in Nature and Perfection*, and have equal right to Divine Honour and Adoration. P. 24, 25, 26. "That "Jeſus Chriſt is God in the higheſt "and chiefeſt ſenſe, he begins to prove "from the Names, the incommunica-"ble Names of God aſcribed to him. Yet Jeſus Chriſt no where once ſtiles himſelf God, or aſcribes to himſelf the nature of God; and God has no incommunicable Name, that I could ever meet with; no Name but what is given to other Beings beſides himſelf. If the giving the Names of God to any Being beſides him, be Blaſphemy; *J. T.* I doubt will renounce his *Bible* as well as *Chriſt*, and embrace the Doctrine of the *Alchoran*, which ſome affirm beſt ſuits with his Life and good Opinion. He finds in his Bible the Names of God given to Angels, good and evil, to Princes and Prophets: nay he himſelf takes all the pains he can, to prove that the Names, the incommunicable Names of God are given to Jeſus Chriſt. Now if the Man Chriſt Jeſus be not God, then Mr. *Taylor* has prov'd that the Names of God are not incommunicable, for he proves that they are given to Chriſt: ſo that it muſt follow, either that the Names may be given to different Beings in a different

different Senſe, or that God and Jeſus Chriſt are but one Being, or that the Scripture-phraſes are miſapplied, whichit may be he will rather incline to believe.

But he goes on to inform you, *p.* 25. That *Jehovah is a Name only belongs to the moſt High God.* Pſal. 83. 18. *Thou whoſe Name alone is Jehovah.* This is a very pleaſant Proof: for if there be another Perſon or Being beſides the Father, of whom it may be ſaid, *Thou whoſe Name is Jehovah*, then the *Father's* Name alone is not *Jehovah*; for *J. T.* ſays it belongs to another Perſon or Being, who is a Son, and not a Father: ſo that this proof deſtroys it ſelf; for if the Father's Name alone be *Jehovah*, ſo as that Name is not to be given to any other beſides him, then Jeſus Chriſt who is another Perſon or Being beſides him, has not and cannot have that Name given or aſcribed to him: but if Jeſus Chriſt has that name given or aſcrib'd to him, which is alſo given to his Father another diſtinct Being, then the Pſalmiſt muſt be miſtaken in ſaying of the Father, *Thou whoſe Name alone is Jehovah*, and the Name is no proper Name for one Being, but is only a proper Name in that Senſe that the name [*John*] is, which belonged *John* the *Baptiſt*, and *John* the *Evangeliſt*, and ſtill belongs to divers particular Men.

P. 26, 27. The *Enquirer* proceeds from ſeveral divine Perfections to prove, *That Jeſus Chriſt was truly God from eternity:* how well he has done this, is not worth while to examine; others having done it to good purpoſe, and I may conſider 'em elſewhere; tho it may be truly ſaid of his Proofs in general, that they prove *one God too many* for the Chriſtian Religion, if they prove Jeſus Chriſt to be a moſt High God from Eternity: for if Jeſus Chriſt was truly ſo from Eternity, that Jeſus Chriſt who was ſo, was not that *very God* who was his *Father*, and the *Fountain* and *Origin* of his Being; but an *eternal God*, *derived*, *originated* and *begotten* by another *eternal God* even the *Father*, who is an *underiv'd*, *originated* and *unbegotten God*; and ſo even in the *Nicene*, nay in the *Athanaſian* Senſe, God the Father was the firſt, the Supreme, and the moſt Divine Being or Perſon in the vulgar Senſe. And in this all the Books that have been or can be publiſh'd on this Subject, muſt of neceſſity center at laſt, *viz.* That Jeſus Chriſt, one diſtinct individual Being or Perſon, is an eternal God, becauſe the Deſcriptions and Characters of another divine Perſon, to wit, the Father, who is on all hands granted to be an eternal God, are, as ſome ſuppoſe, frequently given to him: ſo that rather than they will admit Words and Phraſes to have a different Senſe according to the different Objects whereof they are ſpoken, they chooſe to lay down Premiſes that neceſſarily and unavoidably infer, that there are two or three coeternal and coequal Beings, or Perſons of the ſame *ſort* or *kind* of Divinity. And as the *Enquirer* ſays in another Caſe, *p.* 29. *We may as ſoon deny the light at Noon-day, as the clearneſs of this Evidence.*

After this he proceeds to cite Scripture by wholeſale, and to interpret Texts in that manner, as if he were reſolv'd to fulfil thoſe words of St. *Peter*, 2 *Pet.* 3. 10. which the ignorant and unſtable wreſt, as they do the reſt

of

of the Scriptures, to their own deſtruction.

How bold he makes with the Prophet *Iſaiah* and St. *Paul*, is almoſt a ſcandal to relate: for he proves St. *Paul* to contradict the Prophet in expreſs terms: *P.* 32. " St. *Paul*, ſays he, " knew that *Iſaiah* had aſſerted there " was none to be likened or compar'd " to him, *i. e.* to God, and yet St. *Paul* " with the greateſt aſſurance aſſerts, that " Jeſus Chriſt was in the form of God, " and was equal to him. *i. e.* What *Iſaiah* expreſly denys, St. *Paul* as expreſly affirms, that there was one who might be compared to God, becauſe he was abſolutely equal to God; that is in plain Engliſh, there are two coequal Gods, really diſtinct Beings, but of equal and like Perfections.

The *Enquirer* had neither Skill nor Judgment to examine the great number of Texts he has cited; but thinks to gain the point by a Poll, he has preſs'd all the Texts he could meet with into his Service, and hopes, I ſuppoſe, that ſome amongſt the crowd will paſs for good Teſtimony; and ſo they do in the opinion of the Crowd: But for the *Trinitarian* Gentlemen that are Men of Learning and Reading, they have with great candour and ſincerity acknowledged, that moſt, if not all the Texts produced by this unſtudied Preacher, are no good Proofs of the matter for which they are alledg'd; ſome I am certain are as much to the purpoſe as *Pharaoh's* Dreams, or the renown'd *Ecce duos gladios:* And I don't ſee but *ecce duos gladios* is as good, and Catholick Proof for two diſtinct Gods, as it paſſes for in the Church of *Rome*, for two diſtinct Juriſdictions.

P. 46. " But the *Enquirer* will have " the Diſciples of Chriſt to be the " worſt of Men, for applying Texts " which ſpeak of God in the Old Teſtament to Jeſus Chriſt in the New, " if he was not of the ſame Eſſence " with the Father. God forbid it!

But does he not impoſe upon himſelf and his Readers, by the terms [*ſame Eſſence*] for they may ſignify either *one Being*, or *one kind of Being:* if the former, then Jeſus Chriſt will be the Father, and his own Father: if the latter, then *the Father* is *one moſt High Being*, and *Jeſus Chriſt* another of the *ſame kind*, and the *Holy Ghoſt a Third*, and ſo we ſhall have three diſtinct moſt High Gods.

But the *Enquirer* in *p.* 48, 49. falls upon the odious Proof of Jeſus Chriſt being guilty of Blaſphemy, and fixes the *Jewiſh Calumny* in the ſtricteſt Senſe upon him, *That he made himſelf equal with God*, *i. e.* that he made himſelf another God; for equality neceſſarily requires two at leaſt: or that Jeſus Chriſt made himſelf equal to the Father, whom the Jews, as our bleſſed Saviour aſſures us, look'd upon to be the only true God, *John* 8. 54. How ready is the *Enquirer* to join hands with the Jews in an unjuſt Accuſation againſt our B. Saviour! for he tells you, *p.* 49. " Theſe are the things they alledg " in their defence for crucifying Jeſus " Chriſt; and we demand, ſays the " *Enquirer*, how any Man or Compa- " ny of Men, that deny his Divinity, " can take off the force of 'em. So that *J. T.* has made good the Accuſation againſt Chriſt, and by an abominable and wicked way of reaſoning, he will put a Dilemma upon his Saviour,

and

and prove him a 2d *God*, as Dr. *A—x* ſomewhere ſtiles him; or guilty of Blaſphemy; for which the *Jews* unjuſtly condemn'd him.

In *P.* 52 and 53. he launches out into a new Subject, and tells you, *The Elements in the Euchariſt repreſent Jeſus Chriſt to the Trinitarians giving up himſelf a Sacrifice and Satisfaction to divine Juſtice*; but to the Socinians as a meer example of patience and ſubmiſſion. *i. e.* the Elements repreſent God the eternal Son offering himſelf to God the eternal Father, to ſatisfy the Father's Juſtice; the Son having none it ſeems to ſatisfy. How ſtrange a Repreſentation is this of Chriſt's Death and Sufferings! yet a very familiar one with the Soliſidians.

Let me deſire the Gentlemen who are Favourers of his Book, to reflect a little upon the Character and Quality of this pious and zealous Defender of Tritheiſm, and I'm much miſtaken if they don't acknowledg that ſo laſcivious a Vindicator is a very improper Champion for their beloved Tritheiſm, that admirable and wonderful Myſtery.

For if the Unitarians are attack'd, and their Doctrines exploded by Men of ſuch a profligate Life, and flagitious Crimes, as the *Brief Enquirer* has led and committed in the face of the World; they will have very little reaſon to fear their cauſe, tho both Unitarians and Tritheiſts too have great cauſe to be aſham'd of ſuch a ſcandalous Author, whom in his 55*th* Page you'll find very buſy a proving the poor *Unitarians* Hereticks, and their Doctrine Hereſy, and thinks no doubt he has prov'd the point as fully as his own People prov'd him an Adulterer, and his Crimes Adultery. I ſhould be ſorry I conſeſs if the former were as true as the latter, but ſhould have been very glad for *J. T*'s ſake if the latter were no truer than the former. But I would feign know of the *Enquirer* and all his Abettors, which is the greater Hereſy, to aſſert as the Tritheiſts do, That there are three eternal, moſt perfect, coequal Beings; or to maintain, as the Unitarians do, that there is and can be but one ſupreme moſt perfect Being, who has no equal, and with whom no other Being is to be compar'd. If I muſt be an Heretick, for my part I would chooſe for my opinion the latter of theſe two Hereſies.

But the *Enquirer* is clearly for the firſt; yet he owns, *P.* 59. *There are few who are capable of underſtanding ſo great a Myſtery*: So ſay the moſt conſiderable Defenders of the *Myſtery*, both *Engliſh* and *Foreigners*. But the Unitarians ſay, and can prove, as they have often done, that 'tis a Myſtery of *Human Invention*, and not of *Divine Revelation*; and by the way, 'tis ſuch a *Myſtery*, that the *Enquirer*, one of the meaneſt of its Defenders, could not ſay one wiſe word in vindication of it at a publick Diſpute: And how could he help it, the *Myſtery* being incomprehenſible?

But he aſſures you, *P.* 69. that *The common People firmly believe the Myſtery, tho they can't comprehend the manner of it.* I anſwer. The Faith of the common People is a groſs *Tritheiſtic* Faith, like that of the *common Preachers*, of which no wiſe Man, nor thinking Chriſtian, can be very fond. I'm ſure the Learned Dr. *S—th*, and the moſt Celebrated Univerſity of *Oxford* have

no value for it, but have ſolemnly condemn'd it, *Nov.* 25. 1695.

But the *Enquirer* has now done with his Proofs, and begins his Remarks upon the Unitarians, who are ſaid to be, P. 60. *Men of holy and pious Lives*, &c. which many Trinitarians are not, the *Enquirer*, for one; and therefore is ſo ready to ingage St. *Paul*, to condemn Hereſy in the Faith, more than Impiety in the Morals. How gladly would ſome Men have their pretended Orthodoxy atone for their real Immorality, and be accounted good Chriſtians for a *myſterious Faith* without *Charity* and *good Life!*

The *Enquirer* admits the Unitarians to be Men of pious lives; but what then, Will that alone qualify 'em for Church-Communion? No by no means, *P.* 62. *If after all means uſed they perſiſt in their Hereſies, they are to be rejected: let their Lives and Converſations be never ſo exact, they are be to rejected by the Church; which ſhews they are not good Chriſtians, and that their Piety is but ſeeming, not real.* Let me recommend for once to all and ſingular of his Reader or Readers, this elaborate *Lipotwhichet* as one of his Maſterpieces; and I challenge 'em to match it in all the Sayings of all the *Seven Wiſe Maſters in Chriſtendom*, *Bevis* of *Southampton*, *Criſpin*, or King *Pharamond*: For I'm ſure that this is true Mother-Wit, and a perfect Original of his own Underſtanding.

But what if one ſhould argue, The *Enquirer* is really immoral, and but ſeemingly Orthodox, therefore he ought to be caſt out of the Church; Would not this look with a far better Grace than his Argument? *viz.* You ought to be caſt out of the Church, *ergo*, you are but ſeemingly pious and good Chriſtians. No, no, the *Enquirer* will reply, By no means [*You ought to be caſt out of the Church*] is a ſtanch Reaſon at all times to prove *Hereſy* and *Impiety*, and when all other Arguments fail, this will do: for whoever ought to be caſt out of the Church, can neither be a good Man, nor a true Chriſtian. The *Enquirer* and all his Friends are agreed that the Unitarians ought to be caſt out of the Church; and then to be ſure they are no good Chriſtians.

But what if the Unitarians ſhould think the *Enquirer* ought to be caſt out of the Church, Would not this prove him no *Chriſtian* too? Yes certainly, if his own Argument be a good one: but his Congregation I hear have done him that piece of Juſtice already, and the zealous Excluder is himſelf excluded, and declar'd in his own Stile, *Incommunicable*: which ſeems to be a remarkable inſtance of Divine Vengeance upon him, for vilifying his Maker, reproaching his Saviour, extolling *Mahomet*, decrying the *Chriſtian*, which is the beſt *Religion*, and *the Unitarians the trueſt Profeſſors of it.* He who wrote to encourage Schiſm, and Diviſion, has his own Church firſt broken and divided, and then himſelf upon full evidence ſentenc'd, and declared incommunicable by that very dividing Party, who were his unwary Admirers. *How righteous are thy Judgments, O God!* Pſal. 73. 25. *Whom have we in Heaven but* Thee? *and whom is there on Earth that we ought to eſteem or adore in compariſon with thee?*

God grant him repentance unto life: he is at preſent in the gall of bitterneſs and bond of Iniquity; for that reaſon under

under the Church's righteous *Anathema*; his pretended Orthodoxy could not reſcue him from the Cenſure: and without a ſolemn Renunciation of his former Life, of whatever ſtamp his religious Opinions are, he muſt unavoidably fall under the *Maranatha* of an affronted Deity.

Thus, Sir, I think without a Spirit of Prophecy, I may foretel the *unrepenting Enquirer's* Doom: but I am yet to tell you the Fate both of the Arguments, and the Author of the *Socinian Slain*, *P.* 1. who talks ſo much of his Weapons, that I am tempted to think him rather a Maſter of the noble Science of Defence, than a Maſter of Arts. Whoever and whatever this Writer is, I wiſh he had been inſpir'd with a Spirit of Meekneſs and Humility, before he had undertaken this Task, and then we had met with more Charity and Modeſty in his Diſcourſe: and I heartily wiſh he had taken the Spirit of Truth for his Guide, and then he had made a better uſe of the Sword of the Spirit, than he has now done with the Arm of Fleſh.

But alas for him, he knows not what Spirit he is of, tho his Readers may eaſily ſee that he has a Spirit of Envy and Uncharitableneſs; and that he has not the Civility of a Gentleman, or the Temper of a Chriſtian, by his ill Language, and abuſive Reflections in the 2*d*, 38*th*, 48*th*, 52*d*, 53*d* pages.

But the Unitarians muſt be decry'd at any rate, and ſo that be done, it matters not what the Arguments are. He would not trouble himſelf to ſtand to pick and chooſe; or if he did make a choice, he has taken the moſt inconcluſive and the moſt ill-natur'd he could light upon.

Socin. Slain, p. 2. *When* (ſays the Socinian Slain) *a Neighbour's Houſe is on Fire, or the Air infected with the Peſtilence, and the Enemies of God and his Servants are in a Combination, and lie in wait to deceive the Ignorant and Unwary, it's every Man's Duty to extinguiſh the Flame*, &c. This is very true; and the Unitarians have a good Title to theſe Conſiderations: But what has any *Athanaſian* or *Tritheiſtic Writer* to do with 'em? The *Fire*, and *Peſtilence*, and *Craft* of *Athanaſius* have done too too much Injury to the *Chriſtian Faith* already; and has deceiv'd this very *unwary Writer*, and all *his Elect*, if any one can truly be ſaid to be deceiv'd by another, who impoſes upon himſelf by ſuch *inconſiderable Sophiſtry*, as runs through his whole inconſiderable Pamphlet.

He firſt takes it for granted, that by the Holy Ghoſt we are to underſtand a ſingle intelligent Being or Subſiſtence, diſtinct from the Father, the moſt High God, and then takes upon him to prove that *this Being* is the moſt High God too. We will be ſo civil to him for once as to admit the firſt to be true; but the Holy Scriptures, and the reaſon of all Mankind will never admit the ſecond to be ſo too: for if they are not one, but two diſtinct individual Beings, they cannot both be the moſt High God. *Yes*, replies the Socinian Slain, *that muſt be granted me too, as I will make it appear by twenty demonſtrative Arguments.* Twenty Demonſtrations is a round number, but one good Demonſtration is as good as a thouſand; and I can produce a thouſand at any

time of the day out of the 1*ſt* and 2*d* Book of *Chronicles*, as good and as concluſive as any of the 20 in the *Socinian Slain*; but then I muſt expoſe my ſelf and the Holy Scripture too, as the *Socinian Slain* hath done; but God forbid I ſhould be guilty of *his Faults*.

But the *Socinian Slain*, p. 3. tells you, *The Holy Ghoſt made the Heavens and the Earth, and cites for a Proof* Gen. 1.2. Who I pray is this Holy Ghoſt? a 3*d* Divine Being, diſtinct in Number, Will, and Underſtanding, *i. e.* diſtinct in Perſon from the Father and the Son. If ſo, then we have three Creators, three Gods, three diſtinct Beings of infinite Wiſdom and Power, which is two too many for Divine Revelation, and the moſt evident Reaſon of Mankind.

No matter for that, the *Socinian Slain* will rather chooſe to have it ſo, than have his Arguments exploded as abſurd: And therefore on he goes, right or wrong, with his wonderful and ſurprizing Proofs, and tells you in the next place, that, *P.* 4. *The Holy Ghoſt is omniſcient, and therefore*, &c. *And* 1ſt, *He is ſo, becauſe he knows all the deep things of God*; *and* 2ly, *becauſe he knows all the deep things of Man.*

The latter of theſe two may be known without being omniſcient, and the former are known to God alone. Infinite Mind can only know what is in infinite Mind; but then that infinite Mind is but one.

If he believes the Holy Ghoſt is one infinite Mind or Underſtanding diſtinct from another infinite Mind, and yet knows all that the other Infinite can comprehend; then this Author's Faith is condemn'd by the Univerſal Church, the late *Oxford*-Decree, and by the Holy Scriptures: but if he believes God to be one infinite Mind and Being, who alone is conſcious to his own Thoughts, and no other Being beſides him is privy to 'em, as every Man knows his own Mind, and no other Man can know what's in his Mind till he reveal it to him, which is the true Senſe of 1 *Cor.* 2. 10, 11. we are agreed, for undoubtedly God knows all that he knows.

The reſt of his Arguments are all of a piece, till you come to the 18*th*, unleſs you will except the eleventh, where he tells you, *The Holy Ghoſt is the moſt High God, becauſe Sin and Blaſphemy againſt him are unpardonable.* Now this ſeems the moſt concluding and deciſive Proof of all the 20 Demonſtrations; nay, as the Author manages it, it will prove more a great deal than ever he deſign'd it ſhould. For if the Holy Ghoſt be God becauſe Sin and Blaſphemy againſt him are unpardonable; then the Father and Son cannot be ſo, becauſe all manner of Sins and Blaſphemies againſt them will be forgiven, *Mat.* 11. 31. And now let this Writer conſider if he has not finely prov'd the Deity of the Holy Ghoſt, and excluded the other two Divine Perſons from the moſt ſacred Order of his moſt high Gods. He has given the 3*d* a greater Prerogative than the 1*ſt* and 2*d* Perſons, and ſo inſtead of proving him God equal to the Father and the Son, has prov'd him God ſuperiour in this reſpect to both: which is ſuch a way of proving he never had been guilty of, had he but conſulted his own Reaſon, or a good Commentator; and if he did it knowingly, 'tis very likely to be an unpardonable Sin.

The *Socinian Slain* has but one Argument more that merits a Remark, and that's

that's his eighteenth. *The Holy Ghoſt*, ſays he, P. 21. *is one God with the Father and Son, and therefore is the moſt High God; I mean with reſpect to his Eſſence, ſince every Body will grant that the Father is ſo.* What dos this Author mean by one God with the Father and Son? one Being with the Father and Son, or that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt are but one ſingle Being? If this be his meaning, tho it be not well expreſſed, yet it looks more like a Divine Unity, and is indeed the nominal Trinity, and not the Tritheiſtic againſt which I write. Or dos he mean by one God with the Father and Son, that the Holy Ghoſt is a God of the ſame Divine Kind with the Father and the Son? If this be his Senſe, as ſome other Paſſages ſeem to countenance, then without breach of Charity, I muſt charge him, tho I am ſorry for it, with down-right Tritheiſm or Polytheiſm, which I take to be a much heavier Accuſation than any he can charge, or has fairly brought againſt his real Well-wiſhers the Unitarians.

But the Author has another ambiguous Phraſe in his Proof, and that is, *That the Holy Ghoſt is moſt High God, with reſpect to his Eſſence.* What, is he not ſo then with reſpect to his Perſon? if he be not ſo in Perſon, I don't ſee how he can be ſo at all; for what he is not as a Perſon, he is not any other way; for all he is, is Perſon: *No, no, the* Socinian Slain *can find out a way wherein he is the moſt High God, tho he be not ſo in Perſon.* How I pray, not by Proxy certainly? No, *but in Eſſence.*

Now I would fain know of the Author of the *Socinian Slain* what Eſſence ſignifies in this place, and in other Paſſages of his Book, for he ſeems to uſe it in no certain Senſe: which is unfair.

The Schoolmen have us'd a Term in their Metaphyſical Writings: this

1. For common Nature, or kind of Being.
2. For particular Nature, or ſingle Being. And
3. For eſſential Properties of Being.

Will this Author be underſtood in any or none of theſe Senſes? If he mean by Eſſence, common Nature, or kind of Being; then Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, are three individual Gods numerically diſtinct in their Beings, but of the ſame ſort or Species of Divine Nature: this I think bids faireſt for his Senſe.

Or dos he mean by Eſſence, ſingle Being? then Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, are but three Names for one ſingle Almighty Being, and the proper Notion of Perſons in the Godhead will be loſt in this Senſe: yet this ſometimes muſt be his meaning, or what he ſays can have no meaning. And I ſuppoſe, he does not underſtand the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt to be three Properties of one Deity.

But let the Author, or any one for him, once aſcertain the Senſe of this term [Eſſence] and the Controverſy will ſoon determine it ſelf: but he and his Authors too, are unwilling to be plain in this matter, leſt the *Myſtery* vaniſhes, and *Truth* ſhould *ſtare 'em in the Face.*

Yet after all, methinks the Author of the *Socinian Slain*, has in ſome Paſſages expounded his meaning, and plainly owns a *plurality of Gods*; and if the

Reader

Reader conſiders what he ſays, and how he ſpeaks in ſome places, he will ſee there is no Reaſon to doubt of it.

I will grant that he ſometimes forgets himſelf, and ſpeaks of Almighty God as one ſingle Being: but his whole Book will correct that meaning; for he contends throughout, that religious Worſhip and Adoration are equally due, and to be paid to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, and in all places ſpeaks of theſe three as three diſtinct individual Beings. For inſtance, in his 30*th* page he ſtiles the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, *Intelligent Almighty Principles of Operation, who created the Heavens and the Earth.*

In Page 31, 32, 33, 36. theſe three are ſpoken of as ſo many diſtinct Beings, in as plain terms as the Wit of Man can expreſs it; and how wary ſoever other Writers have been, the *Socinian Slain* will not and cannot but be underſtood in every Page of his Book diſcourſing of the Holy Ghoſt, as a real, proper, and abſolute Perſon in the Deity, really and intirely diſtinct from the Perſons of the Father, and the Son, in as true and proper a ſenſe as the Perſon of *Peter* is complete in it ſelf, and numerically diſtinguiſh'd from the Perſons of *James* and *John*. And if you would know of him how theſe three intelligent Beings, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt are one; he frequently inculcates this Anſwer, *That they are one in Eſſence, and one in Nature*, or of one Divine Eſſence, and of one Divine Nature: which is juſt the ſame reply that every Body makes to this Queſtion, In what ſenſe may *Peter*, *James* and *John*, *three diſtinct intelligent Beings*, be ſaid to be one? Why the Anſwer is, They are one in Eſſence, or they are one in Nature; or they are of one human Eſſence, and of one human Nature. Now 'tis plain that Divine Eſſence and Nature, as well as human Eſſence and Nature, are abſtract Terms in ſuch Paſſages as theſe, and ſignify common Nature, or ſort of Being, comprehending divers particulars, or ſeveral Individuals under it.

The *Soc. Slain* therefore, and all his Party are for a Specific Trinity of three Formal, Individual, Intelligent, Almighty Beings or Principles, contain'd under one common Nature, or of one divine ſort or kind of Being. And can any thing be more *formal and palpable Tritheiſm* than this? He diſputes for a numerical Diſtinction of theſe three, and aſſerts only a ſpecifical Unity: nay, he aſſerts the equality of theſe three Almighty Beings, and maintains an equal Right that all the *Divine Three*, or the *three coequal Gods* have to our religious Worſhip and Adoration, *p.* 19, 30, 36. *ad finem.* And when this is the Senſe and Language of all his Book, can he with any reaſon take it unkindly if he be underſtood to teach and maintain the Doctrine of *three Almighty Gods?* In ſhort, if that be not his Senſe, all he writes and ſays muſt be Nonſenſe, how orthodox ſoever it may be thought by his Favourers. And whatever may be the *Iſſue* of ſome Mens Doctrines *unfairly repreſented*, *P.* 53. and the *Tendency* of ſome Mens Opinions *untruly and diſingenuouſly ſtated*: 'tis as evident as any thing can be, that this Writer's Doctrines and Opinions are in themſelves, and in their own nature, Heretical, Antichriſtian,

ſtian, Polytheiſtical, and Baſphemous.

The Unitarians are charg'd without Reaſon, and without Scripture by their Adverſaries, with teaching Doctrines that lead to Infidelity and Atheiſm: Would to God this deteſtable Charge were no more true, when brought againſt the *Socinian Slain* and his Tritheiſtic Brethren! But whilſt they continue to hold and profeſs that there are *three infinite Minds, three eternal Principles, three Almighty Creators, three diſtinct individual moſt perfect Beings, three coequal Divine Perſons or Deities, to whom they pay diſtinctly Divine Honours and religious Adoration, and anathematize and perſecute to the death, when the State permits 'em, all others of a different Opinion:* They muſt excuſe all the thinking and conſiderate part of Mankind from embracing their Faith, and believing their Contradictions.

And the *Tritheiſts* muſt pardon the *Unitarians*, who heartily love their Perſons, but deteſt their Errors, if they are compell'd to declare that *Tritheiſm*, or the Doctrine, Belief, and Worſhip of 3 *infinite Beings, Minds, or Gods*, with diſtinct and coequal Veneration, is no Scripture-Doctrine, no Scripture-Faith, no Scripture-worſhip; but a horrible abuſe of the true Chriſtian Religion, a violation of the Law of Nature, a ſtumbling-block to the *Jews* and *Mahometans*, and a revival of Polytheiſm, or a plurality of Gods.

And 'tis in vain for the moſt learned Tritheiſts, and much more vain for theſe illiterate Tritheiſts, to ſet about the confuting us, with one Book and Pamphlet after another. We know what they can ſay, and what they dare not ſay: We ſee what they drive at, and gueſs at their Deſigns; but till theſe equivocal Terms in their Books, *viz.* Nature, Eſſence, Perſon, Subſiſtence, Hypoſtaſis, and the like, are better explain'd, and ſet in their true light, we defy our *Tritheiſtic Adverſaries*, with all their craft and ſubtilty, to purge themſelves and their Writings from *Sophiſtry* and *Equivocation*.

And until they confeſs one infinite Mind, or intelligent Being, even the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to be the moſt High God, and that no other Being is to be compar'd, or equally ador'd with him (*becauſe all other Beings are from Him, and he is from none; becauſe all other Beings beſides him have a Father, Cauſe, or Author of their Beings, and he has none; but by the Confeſſion of our Tritheiſtic Oppoſers, and all the Tritheiſtic Creeds, is the Fountain and Origin of all Beings*) Until they will acknowledg this firſt of Beings to be the moſt High and Supreme God, or God in the chief-eſt Senſe, and give Him peculiar Honour and Adoration as ſuch: We will tell 'em before-hand their Undertaking to confute us is deſperate, and our Principles are irrefutable: tho they ſhould write in *defence of Tritheiſm* as many Volumes in Folio as there are Stars in the Firmament, or Sands on the Sea-ſhoar, they will never be able to prove their *Tritheiſm* either true or poſſible, as long as any Bibles remain in *Chriſtendom*, or Reaſon continues in uſe among Men. But when our Reaſon has left us, and our Bibles are gone; they may decree and impoſe to good purpoſe, tho they can never diſpute with ſucceſs.

In the mean time, there is not a ſingle Unitarian, but will heartily pity the

the *mistaken Tritheists*, who have a Zeal, but not according to knowledg; and be always imitating the *Blessed Jesus* in praying in the same manner, and to the same Object as he did, even *to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God, that the thoughts of their hearts may be forgiven 'em*, Joh. 20. 17. that they may know the *Father to be the only true God*, and glorify *him*, chap. 17. 3. even as *Christ himself glorify'd him*, chap. 17. 4. that they may be sanctified thro the Truth, and *like true Worshipers worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth*, as Christ himself did, Joh. 14. 16. *For the Father seeketh such to worship him, who bow their Knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto whom be glory in the Church by Jesus Christ throughout all Ages, world without end.* Amen. Eph. 3. 14—21.

Now the God of patience and consolation grant, Rom. 15. 5, 6. that the *Unitarians*, and their mistaken Brethren the *Tritheists*, may be of one Faith, *likeminded one towards another, according to Jesus Christ; that we may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:* And let all the People say, *Amen.*

Thus, Sir, have I given you some general Remarks upon these two new Writers, and their successless Performances: and tho my leisure will not admit me, and the merits of the Authors do not require me to make a distinct reply to every particular Text they pervert; yet I'm satisfy'd these few Observations and Replys I have made, are sufficient to obviate the Scruples they have rais'd in the Minds of a few unwary Christians. I am,

SIR,

With great Veneration,

Y. v. h. S—t,

A. B.

The *Oxford*-Decree English'd.

At a Meeting of Mr. Vice-Chancellor, and the Heads of Colleges and Halls in the University of Oxford, Novemb. 25. 1695.

UPON occasion of a Sermon lately preached before the University of *Oxford*, in the Church of St. *Peter's* in the East, on the Feast of St. *Simon* and *Jude* last past, these words amongst others were publickly spoken and asserted, *viz.* [*There are three infinite distinct Minds and Substances in the Trinity*] Item, [*That the three Persons in the Trinity are three distinct infinite Minds or Spirits, and three individual Substances,*] which words gave many Persons just cause of Offence and Scandal.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, and the Heads of the Colleges and Halls being now met together, in their General Meeting, judg, declare, and decree, That the foresaid Words are false, impious, and heretical; disagreeing and contrary to the Doctrine of the Catholick Church, and specially to the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, publickly received.

Wherefore they order and strictly enjoin all and several the Persons committed to their Trust and Care, that for the future they do not maintain any such Doctrine in their Sermons, or elsewhere.

By the Decree of Mr. Vice-Chancellor and the Heads.

Ben. Cooper, Notary Publick, and Register to the University of *Oxford.*

There was added in the *London* Account this Postscript, *viz.* [*It may be noted, that the Propositions above-mentioned, are* Dr. S——k's, *in his Discourse of the Trinity, and the Defenders of it; and wrote against by the Animadverter*, &c.

FINIS.

22.6*4/6